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ABSTRACT

The vocational education research and development (R & D) provisions in Public Law 94-482, the Education Amendments Act of 1976, are the primary focus of this commentary by the counsel and staff director of the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor. Focus is on the basic rationale and foundation upon which the vocational R & D provisions were established and the expectations of Congress concerning the outcome of resources allocated for vocational education R & D. The four-page formal presentation is followed by an 11-page transcription of the question and answer period, which followed the speech to an audience of research and development personnel. The questions, relating to the content of various provisions in Public Law 94-482, are answered by both the speaker (subcommittee counsel) and by the subcommittee's minority counsel. (BM)

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Occasional Paper No. 27

COMMENTARY ON LEGISLATION AFFECTING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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The Center for Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
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PREFACE

The Center for Vocational Education is indebted to Mr. John Jennings and Mr. Charles Radcliffe for their presentation entitled "Commentary on Legislation Affecting Vocational Education Research and Development." Both of these professionals serve as primary staff in the U.S. House of Representatives and are eminently qualified to address such a topic.

The commentary focuses primarily on the (1) basic rationale and foundation upon which the vocational education R&D provisions in Public Law 94-482 were established and (2) the expectations of Congress concerning the outcome of resources allocated for vocational education R&D. Responses are provided to a number of relevant questions raised with regard to congressional content of various provisions in Public Law 94-482, Education Amendments Act of 1976.

Mr. Jennings is a native of the state of Illinois. He received a B.A. in history from Loyola University (1964) and J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law (1967). In 1967, Jennings was admitted to the Illinois State Bar and the Federal Bar (7th District). In 1969, he was admitted to the Bar of the District of Columbia.

Since 1967, Mr. Jennings has served in his current position as Counsel and Staff Director, Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives. The subcommittee has jurisdiction over the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the School Lunch Act, the Vocational Education Act, the Emergency School Act, Indian Education, School Constitution, School Desegregation Impact Act, School Financing, and other general legislation affecting elementary and secondary education.

A native of the state of Indiana, Mr. Radcliffe holds a B.A. degree from Bates College and a LL.B. from Georgetown University Law School. He is a member of the Bar of the District of Columbia.

Mr. Radcliffe is the Minority Counsel, Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives, a position he has held since 1963. His prior experience includes U.S. Senate Staff, U.S. Office of Education legislature officer and Assistant Director of the 1955 White House Conference on Education.

On behalf of The Center and The Ohio State University, I take pleasure in introducing Mr. Jenning's and Mr. Radcliffe's presentation, "Commentary on Legislation Affecting Vocational Education Research and Development."

Robert E. Taylor, Director
The Center for Vocational
Education

REMARKS: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION

by

John F. Jennings

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you about the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 as they affect vocational research. I will try to describe the congressional motivations in writing these provisions as well as the actual provisions themselves.

We must begin by realizing that these amendments cannot be looked at in isolation. Rather, they must be viewed in terms of the broader context of Congress' attitude towards educational research.

As I am sure most of you are well aware, the last decade has seen the expenditure of millions and millions of federal dollars for research in education. These ten years also witnessed the development of regional laboratories and centers throughout the country under the authority of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the creation in Washington of the National Institute of Education. But the decade also saw the initial promise of these creations and of this outpouring of funds being frustrated so that the expectations surrounding their beginnings remain unfulfilled.

Even though there are very articulate, forceful and knowledgeable advocates of education research in Congress, especially John Brademas of Indiana and Albert Quie of Minnesota, the Congress in general has not committed itself recently to substantially increasing the funding for educational research. The latest example of this lack of commitment occurred last week when the House Appropriations Committee refused to accept a budget request from the Administration urging an increase in the NIE appropriations from last year's level of $70 million to a new level of $90 million. Instead, the Appropriations Committee left NIE at last year's budget level.

It is safe to say that the present general congressional view of educational research is one of skepticism about its effectiveness and therefore a reluctance to increase its funding, and also an unwillingness to cut back on support due to a lingering belief that maybe eventually some good will result. Although it is always very difficult to try to generalize the views of 535 members of Congress, I believe that the last few years' history of appropriations and the intense controversy surrounding the existence of NIE serve to support that conclusion.

If such an attitude now exists in Congress, what can we attribute to it? I believe that we can isolate five factors which impact on this view although I am sure that many other factors also exist.

1. The first is a general feeling that educational research has shown few results for all the millions spent on it within the last decade.

2. Second is the belief that the little good which has resulted has not been widely disseminated for use in classrooms.

3. The third is that educational research compares poorly when set side by side with scientific research and especially with health research.

4. Fourth is that the pressures are becoming more intense every day to concentrate educational resources on actual classroom instruction and attendant spiraling costs, such as fuel and pension funds.

5. The final factor is that congressmen tend to be persons of action who want to see results as soon as possible, and therefore by nature are not inclined to wait years to see the results of expenditures for research.

Now I know that there are arguments that can be made about the validity of each one of these factors, and possibly educational research suffers from a poor image about what it has achieved and as importantly about what can reasonably be expected of it. Nonetheless, my purpose today is not to debate those points. Rather, I would like you to understand the context in which vocational research was discussed in Congress during 1975 and 1976. Hopefully then, you can understand better why Congress did what it did in the 1976 Vocational Education Amendments because what I have described as an attitude in Congress about education research in general was also held as regards vocational research in particular.

Committee reports accompany bills which are approved by committees, and they are important because frequently they are the best source of information summarizing congressional hearings and giving full presentations of congressional thinking concerning legislation. Therefore, I believe that it would be worthwhile to read the committee report on the 1976 Vocational Education Amendments if you are interested in understanding why Congress did what it did. The remainder of my remarks will summarize the amendments Congress adopted which affect vocational research.

The vocational amendments affecting research fall into two general categories: the first type seeks to remove obstacles created by federal law or administration to the effectiveness of vocational research; and the second type seeks to better focus research to produce the results Congress wants.

Regarding the efforts to remove federal obstacles to effectiveness, the first action and probably the most important, is that the Congress last year finally moved to forward funding the appropriations under the Vocational Act. The lack of adequate notice of the level of appropriations has always been a severe problem in federal education programs, and without a doubt this lack of notice has impeded the effectiveness of vocational research. Soon that problem ought to be resolved.

The second set of actions Congress took concern the direct funding of vocational research by the U.S. Office of Education. The new amendments require that 5 percent of the appropriations under the act must be set aside for national programs, including research programs. The Administration, in making its budget request for fiscal 1978, and the House Appropriations Committee, in voting out the advance appropriations for fiscal 1978 last week, both respected that 5 percent set aside. This ought to bring stability to the research program since prior congressional appropriations for vocational research have varied from 5 percent to 10 percent of the total appropriation.

The Vocational Amendments of 1976 also remove the state allocation requirement for these funds for national research. This, too, ought to allow a more concerted effort to be made by the federal government in funding national research.

The last two changes on the federal level are requirements in the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 for increased staffing in the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education and for

the establishment of a coordinating committee for vocational education research. The increased staffing, which will come about by the end of next year, should lead to more personnel being assigned from the national level to assist state and local researchers. The coordinating committee has two purposes: to better coordinate the research and demonstration efforts of the Office of Education, the National Institute of Education, and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education; and to develop a better management system for all of these research efforts.

As regards state efforts in vocational research, the new vocational amendments remove the separate categorical funding for the research program, the exemplary projects program, and the curriculum development program. This means that a state can, if it wants to, exceed the prior spending for one or all of these purposes. It also means that the states will have more flexibility in integrating these three activities for a more effective program.

All of the amendments and all of the congressional actions I have described up to now are directed towards easing federal restrictions on the use of funds for research. They are all meant to help the states and the Office of Education do a better job with this increased flexibility.

The second set of amendments involve actions by Congress to direct attention more towards achieving better results with the funds used for vocational research. These amendments apply to the states as well as to the federal government.

The first of these amendments requires that any funds used for research must only be used for applied research. The second amendment requires the states to receive an assurance from the person or organization receiving a research or a curriculum development contract that this contract will result in a reasonable probability of improved teaching techniques or curriculum materials for use in classrooms within five years of the termination of the contract. As regards exemplary projects, the states must show in their state plans the disposition of each exemplary project at the end of its three years of funding.

Another amendment restricts states to only making contracts for research, exemplary projects, and curriculum development. The U.S. Office of Education is restricted to primarily making contracts but also is permitted to make grants in isolated cases and then only when these grants will result in a reasonable probability of improved teaching techniques or curriculum materials within five years of the termination date of the grant.

Another amendment encourages states to disseminate the results of their research findings much more widely by authorizing the hiring of local disseminators within the states. States must also make greater efforts to develop curriculum materials free of sex stereotyping, and the U.S. Office of Education must convert for civilian use curriculum materials developed by the Armed Services.

The last amendment requires states to develop comprehensive plans of program improvement under the direction of the research coordinating units for all of their efforts involving research, demonstration programs, and curriculum development.

All of these amendments are meant to give a better focus to federally assisted programs. The Congress has made clear in its committee reports and in its floor discussions that it wants to see better and quicker results from the expenditure of federal funds for research, demonstration programs, and curriculum development in vocational education. It also has admitted that its own actions through tardy appropriations and erratic funding and through undue restrictions in federal laws have impeded the effectiveness of efforts in this field.

Congress has tried to eliminate the impediments it created in its laws and in its practices, and now it expects the Office of Education and the states to produce better and quicker results.

The end product of all these efforts must be to develop better local vocational education programs throughout the country. And, given our growing awareness of our limited resources, we must make all possible efforts to achieve that result with the funds available to us. Projects which have been funded in the past may no longer be funded in the future, not necessarily because they have no worth but rather because there are other projects which can show better results more quickly. Efforts in the past have been too unfocused, and now they must be targeted much more precisely.

I would like to close this discussion by saying a few words about the last major amendment Congress adopted regarding vocational research. That amendment requires the Commissioner to create a national center for research in vocational education.

This center must conduct applied research, develop leadership activities, disseminate results, assist in national planning, serve as a clearinghouse for information on previously funded programs, and assist the states and local school districts in planning and evaluation.

That description shows that the national center will have quite a monumental task to perform, and it also shows that much is expected of it by the Congress. We have yet to see which institution will be chosen and how that institution will go about its tasks.

I would, however, like to leave one thought and that is that whichever institution is chosen, it must dedicate itself to modernizing vocational education and making it a more relevant and flexible system of education. If this center merely becomes a "cheering section" for what already exists, it will receive considerable support from the field and will probably assure itself of a comfortable existence. But that choice will doom the center to ineffectiveness in the long run.

The new vocational amendments show that vocational education has to broaden itself and reach out in its planning and operation of programs to many different types of agencies and people than it has ever involved before. These amendments also show that local programs must be made much more relevant to immediate and perspective jobs than they are doing now. The national center must assist in fulfilling the promise of these amendments. Otherwise, it will be, and ought to be, judged a failure.

COMMENTARY ON LEGISLATION AFFECTING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

by

John F. Jennings
and
Charles W. Radcliffe

Question: What kind of information or data would Congress require that would compel them to give greater emphasis to special needs types of populations (i.e., disadvantaged, handicapped, bilingual)?

Response (Jack Jennings):

Congress deals with legislation generally in cycles, so that when the 1963 Vocational Education Act went on the books, it wasn't looked at until 1967. That resulted in the 1968 Amendments. The 1968 Amendments weren't looked at until 1975, then they were looked at that year and the next year and that resulted in the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976. So, really what's going to happen, except for some oversight of programs, is no basic change in legislation until 1982 or 1983. So what you are talking about is what kind of data needs to be available in the early 1980's to help Congress.

For this reason, I think you should be concerned first of all with what kind of data you can develop to help states implement the 1976 Amendments. I think you will find that the women's groups did a wonderful job of presenting to Congress data on the sex stereotyping and sex discrimination which exists in vocational education at the present time. We had separate hearings on sex discrimination and sex stereotyping. Members who were indifferent on the subject came out of those hearings believing that they wanted to make very substantial changes in the act to help reduce sex bias and sex stereotyping. The new act does reflect a whole series of amendments seeking to move the state and local school districts in that direction. I think in terms of having an impact on the legislators, the women's organizations did a superb job, one of the best I've seen in nine years, of making their case and getting some action. Now, I think the important thing is what can you do to implement these amendments to bring about change in state and local school districts. That is the kind of data, in my opinion, you should be concentrating on now. Not necessarily national data for use by legislators at this time, because Congress will not be reconsidering this area again for over five years.

Question: Would you deal with the teacher education provisions in the new law?

Response (Jack Jennings):

I know there are a number of people here who are interested in teacher training. I think that Congress found that the EPDA Program which has been in existence since 1968 didn't quite meet

the level of expectations held for it then and, that while it did a lot of good, it didn't do it in the manner that Congress thought when they wrote EPDA into the 1968 Amendments. Congress was especially concerned that the program was not originally meant to be limited to high level types of people who would go into top administrative positions in state departments or in large school districts. I think Congress intended that some individuals selected would be going back into the vocational education classroom. Congress also thought the program should be operated on a national competition basis and not simply be operated through state departments of education.

Based on these concerns, Congress in 1976 modified the EPDA Program in two respects. They stated that the Office of Education had imposed a regulation on the program that was not called for in the law, by delegating its responsibilities to state departments of education and that such delegation is not to occur in the future. That means from now on, leadership awards will be on the basis of a national competition with applications sent to the U.S. Office of Education. The second change made was the addition of two new programs. Congressman Blouin of Iowa especially thought it was time for Congress to address the imbalance that presently exists in the oversupply of teachers in some areas and undersupply in other areas. The undersupply is in early childhood education, vocational education, and education of the handicapped. Congress has therefore amended the EPDA Fellowship Program to select teachers who are certified in the oversupply fields and retrain them for positions in vocational education. They also authorized a program which allows for individuals from industry to be brought into the schools for the purpose of teaching job skills to students. The U.S. Office of Education administrators in Washington, D.C. are very skeptical as to whether either one of those two new programs can be successful. They feel that applicants for these two programs will be few. The Congressmen believe differently. They feel there will be a number of teachers who will apply for this fellowship and also a number of people from industry who wish to teach in public schools.

I would not misinterpret this as a device to take teachers who are not prepared in terms of the skills necessary to teach in vocational education and simply provide them with a job due to declining enrollments. The emphasis in both cases is on people who have skills that needed to be taught in vocational education and who require some assistance in moving into the vocational education profession. I think there is as much interest in getting people from industry as there is for getting teachers who are unemployed.

Response (Charles Radcliffe):

I think the reason that Congress is right in this new program is that there are many people who are changing careers due to disenchantment with what they are doing. Many would like to get into something like vocational education where they could use the knowledge they possess to good effect and have a genuine impact for good on people's lives.

I think that Byrl Shoemaker has done an extraordinary job in this respect in Ohio. He and I have talked about the desirability of such a program for years.

Question: Several criteria were developed for the evaluation provisions in the new law. Are these criteria realistic in terms of the difficulty in obtaining such data?

Response (Charles Radcliffe):

There has been considerable discussion concerning what sort of criteria to use to evaluate programs. Depending on who was making the judgement, of course, you could come out differently,

and criteria different from those in the new act were suggested. There was a concern that vocational education does prepare people for more than immediate job placement, although job placement certainly is the goal. Still, having people go into the armed forces from vocational programs, as well as into post-secondary academic work and other areas certainly should count as "placement." The crux of the matter is "how do you tell whether a program should be retained or dropped and whether the program is successful or not?" When you attempt to answer these questions, the fundamental criteria must be job placement in jobs for which an individual is prepared or in a closely related job area. The next logical criteria relates to a person's perception of whether or not he/she was well prepared for the job and whether or not he/she was satisfied with the area for which he/she prepared. Third, one must consider the employer's perception of whether the vocational program is worthwhile from his/her point of view. That perhaps is the critical measure. Thus, we selected those criteria that should be the very essence of what you would base a judgment as to whether a program should be added, dropped, or maintained. If you listed any additional criteria, there would be overlap to the point that program administrators would be confused and the data collected confounded to the extent that it might be useless for program planning.

Question: The question is, what about other evaluation factors such as family background, personal command of the basics, and academic basic skills which may be involved?

Response (Jack Jennings):

Yes, of course, those are important. I know that vocational educators are asking the question, "Why judge us by standards that aren't applied to the rest of education?" Maybe it's because Congress has taken the lead in this country in encouraging vocational education and has a great deal of faith in the capability of vocational education to solve some of the difficult employment problems we face. So, they're asking more of vocational education.

But also I would hazard a guess that when Congress gets around to renewing some of the other educational programs, they're going to be more stringent in terms of the evaluation of those programs. Certainly, this should hold true for the Title I Program in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

As regards vocational education, Congress felt that often job performance and job satisfaction are the most appropriate ways to evaluate how well a person is prepared for a vocation. Sure, all these other factors are involved and we all know that. It seems to me that, perhaps, even more important than vocational skills, are the fundamental academic skills of reading, writing, and figuring. That may be the greatest point of failure in American education. It should perhaps be our greatest concern. There again, I'm not sure that everything can be done by the school. It is increasingly important that we use every community and family resource available to us and find more effective ways to help families deal with these problems. I'm not sure all of that can be done by federal action, but I am reasonably confident that we, as a people, have the capacity to overcome this problem.

Question: What should be the thrust of vocational education from Congress' point of view?

Response (Charles Radcliffe):

I think that, clearly, the thrust is preparation for employment. I think historically that has been the thrust of it. If that isn't the purpose of vocational education, what is the purpose? Why have it? I'm not saying that there aren't other values. I'm not saying that at all. My dad was a

blacksmith and a good man. There are a lot of values that I gained from associating with my father and knowing something about his work, and there were values he derived from his trade other than economic. He had a great feeling for the artistic possibilities of handwrought metal. But the primary reward was employment. Now, I'm sure there are other values in education. But as I would assess the mood of Congress, they're thinking more and more that education, all of education, ought to be preparation for productive employment in this society. They realize other values are there and that they are important. But without productive employment in some career, what do the other values amount to? Very generally, that is my assessment of the mood of Congress. That's why there is so much interest in what is called career education. Let me say, very briefly, that we have some problems with which we simply must deal. In good times and bad, the rate of unemployment of out-of-school youth in this country between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four is substantial. Most of them are in the full-time civilian labor market. The rates of unemployment are the highest in the Western world, and they are bad in good economic times. They are disgraceful. This in very large part is structural unemployment. It is a reflection of young people without employable skills. The other causal factor is the limited employment opportunities for women. Jack talked about the evidence before the House Education and Labor Committee. I must say as a father of a young daughter, I was shocked by the irrefutable evidence presented. For example, the average woman college graduate in the full-time work force in this country earns less today than the average male high school dropout in the full-time labor force. The differential between the income of women and men in our country is not growing less. It's growing larger and has been over the past decade. There are a variety of reasons for some of these trends, not all related to education, but vocational education has a tremendous responsibility in solving societal problems related to preparation for employment.

Question: What was the Congressional intent with regard to unpaid employment?

Response (Jack Jennings):

With unpaid employment, I don't think it's so much Congress having a precise idea about what it wanted to authorize. Rather, they didn't want to close the door by saying that occupational training can only be for paid employment. I feel they recognized that there could be situations in which someone could learn a job skill, but decide not to accept money or decide to do volunteer work. There could also be a number of other situations.

Question: Does Congress have a view that vocational education can lead to helping resolve youth unemployment problems?

Response (Jack Jennings):

I'll give a very frank answer which is always dangerous when you are a staff member and working for other people. I think you'll find that some members of Congress believe that very much. I feel that both Congressman Perkins from Kentucky and Mr. Quie from Minnesota do. We have found Congress to be more than willing to vote for a vocational education bill authorizing funds for the program. But when dollars are considered (that is, when appropriations are actually made), we have not seen a big dollar increase for vocational education, in any substantive terms, for at least six years. This is especially true when you consider the rate of inflation. Part of the problem has been a Republican administration and a Democratic Congress feuding over education dollars and whether dollars should be spent for social programs or other things. It was also partially an indication that a perception exists among a number of members of Congress and the people in the Office of Management

and Budget, that vocational education is not all that relevant to immediate job prospects. Now that may be a rather harsh statement and one which my boss doesn't agree with at all. But I think that is the perception of a number of people. Look at the recent Carter budget requests. He's asking billions for CETA programs for youth unemployment. Congress is also putting billions into public works and we can't get $100 million as an increase in appropriations for vocational education. Congressman Perkins and Congressman Quie sent a letter to the Appropriations Committee in the House requesting such an increase, they tried to work with the committee members to get that increase. Instead, vocational education received $25 million as an increase which barely meets the rate of inflation. It's very difficult to get money out of Congress in any substantial terms for vocational education. I think part of it is budgetary problems, but more importantly, it is the image of vocational education among important decision-makers.

Question: Why does vocational education legislation address areas which are clearly the responsibility of agencies other than education?

Response (Jack Jennings):

Part of it is just purely an institutional problem. If you've ever been involved in public policy work, whether it's in the city council, the state legislature, or the national legislature, it inevitably has to remind you of the image people evoke when they say that something looks like "an elephant that was put together by a committee." It has different pieces hanging out at different parts. These bills are not written by any one person. They're generally written by a group of people or by a committee.

The new vocational education law is very unusual in having some uniformity to it. If you look at other laws, you'll find different pieces going off in really different directions because different Congressmen and Senators have developed a chunk here and there. Even in this law, you have some things that sort of "hang out." It's just institutional.

Now with those particular things that you mentioned, I think that the correctional institution emphasis is in the bill because of Senator Pell. He has very strong interests in trying to get better job training in prisons in Rhode Island, and he's Chairman of the Senate Education Committee which is a powerful position in the area of education. He carried his interests into the Vocational Education Bill. He was very insistent that the corrections provisions in the Senate bill be incorporated into the final bill. The members agreed to it.

In another area, Congressman Quie has very strong interests in Indian education and was responsible for the Indian provision in the bill. He was also very insistent that the provision be carried through to the end and be incorporated into final legislation.

So it's partially because of the manner in which legislation comes about. You can have one or two members insisting on something and because of their arguments, forcefully carry them through. It's also because you need a concensus in getting something finalized.

In addition to those reasons, I think you find that Congress is not reluctant to violate institutional sanctity. Every now and then, they feel that somebody should be stirred up a little bit. Maybe if you give authority to the State Board of Vocational Education in Rhode Island to offer a correctional program, you'll encourage the Department of Prisons to move forward and do something on its own.

I know Congress has done that in legislation dealing with overseas schools for U.S. Armed Forces dependents. The education committees in Congress have written into federal education laws provisions saying that certain amounts of money available under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act will be available to the overseas schools which are operated by the Department of Defense. D.O.D. overseas schools are the tenth or eleventh largest school system in the world. Yet, the defense committees, in both the House and the Senate, do not want U.S. Office of Education money going into their schools. They want to maintain total control over those schools. But our committees wrote in provisions in 1965 and 1966 regarding D.O.D. overseas schools, knowing they wouldn't be implemented. This put the defense committees on notice that some day they could be implemented. That had the effect of pushing the defense committees into making certain improvements in the overseas schools. So, sometimes these provisions are put in not because Congress wants to respect institutional lines (even within Congress itself), but rather because it sees that if you apply a little pressure, you'll get some changes that are good in terms of the end product.

Question: What kind of guidance can you give us about the adequacy of the research and impact data of target groups identified in the Vocational Amendments of 1968 and now again in the 1976 Amendments specifically the handicapped, the disadvantaged, and the post-secondary? What kind of guidance can you give us about the adequacy of the evidence that comes before Congress on the impact of vocational education on these various groups?

Response (Jack Jennings):

That is a difficult question. I remember back in 1967-68, Chairman Perkins was very proud of the fact that there was a study which showed that vocational education graduates were more employable than general graduates of high schools and he was able to use that report as a debating point to say that this was good expenditure of money, that it shows that vocational education is doing its job. It also showed that if you spend this money, in the long run Congress will be more than paid back in increased income taxes for the additional funds it's expending for vocational education. But, I haven't noticed that type of report being available within the last several years. In fact, the types of reports we have seen have shown that vocational graduates after the first couple of years, usually wind up with the same type of job earnings as general graduates do out of high school. So, I think that this type of information that's available to OMB specialists and the Congressional Budget Office, has raised questions in people's minds about whether vocational education is doing a job which is going to result in people getting better jobs over time.

Response (Charles Radcliffe):

I think this is why you have the strong provisions on evaluation. We need that kind of information.

Response (Jack Jennings):

Now you can argue many different things out of that answer. You can say is it legitimate to take one report with all its limitations and disregard those limitations. You know generally what appears in the methodology chapter which goes on forever and is written in language which nobody can understand. It would be better to draw conclusions and then select the conclusion less all the dependent clauses that can be used as a debating weapon. You know people do that and they generally do it to support their own conclusions.

Nonetheless, there has to be some type of evidence to show that vocational education is doing a better job in getting people better jobs than just sending kids through regular classrooms. In the case of the disadvantaged, it's the same type of thing. If there were evaluation reports showing that minority children from Cleveland, after going through vocational courses, did get jobs and that they were doing much better than students in other situations, that would make an impression on Congress. It would help members who want to increase dollars for vocational education develop a case for those dollars.

Now, I don't mean to leave you with a totally gloomy impression about increased federal funding for vocational education. I think that another battle can be made this year and I do see a growing concensus in Washington that vocational education has been shortchanged for the last several years. I can deduce that from the talk among the various education groups that they do realize in the Carter budget and all, that vocational education did not get its due and so possibly with the fiscal 1978 budget, there will be an opportunity to bring about a substantial increase.

Response (Charles Radcliffe):

You know on the funding, too, just very briefly, I would put it in a somewhat different perspective. In 1962, out of a total of $284 million spent for vocational education by state, local, and federal sources, $51.4 million came from the federal government. Today, the total expenditure for vocational education is about $4.5 billion. While we do not have exact figures, we are hoping for $600 million this year from the federal government in support of vocational education. Now, I don't know of any other major education program that has had that kind of increased federal support. Perhaps there is one, but I'm not aware of it.

Question: Are you really saying that we have limited information on the outcomes of the general program?

Response (Jack Jennings):

Well, I don't know about national studies. You know it's very difficult, with a country of 215 million people, to come up with a national study that's going to mean much. I think we'd be more than pleased if you had a sample study of a few states. Researchers in Washington, D.C. enjoy spending their money on national studies. The U.S. Office of Education, it seems, will take every dollar available and invest it in a national longitudinal study. Our problems with that type of approach is that what these researchers adopt as their standards, aren't always what Congress is willing to accept as standards of success. For example, the use of reading scores as the standard of success in Title I. There is lack of agreement that Title I is meant to improve reading scores. Secondly, it depends on who they're looking at. Sometimes they refer to small groups and sometimes to large groups. Sometimes they take samples which people disagree with, which is the common research argument. Another problem is that their timing for such studies is generally atrocious. If we are to renew the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1978, and renew it until 1984 or 1985 and which has been known for four years, researchers will probably finish their relevant studies about 1980. It will probably not be finished in time to have an effect on what Congress is going to do. By the time Congress gets around to the next renewal, the data will be outdated and people will say it's no longer valid. Thus, you've got to do it over again.

Question: Evaluation is implicit throughout the legislation. Who is intended to do which evaluations, for what purposes, and are they to be articulated?

Response (Charles Radcliffe):

They are intended to serve a variety of purposes. Perhaps we haven't thought enough about the articulation of evaluation. Part of the problem is that they serve different purposes. The NIE study is a one-shot study for Congressional purposes, to get an independent evaluation of where vocational education is now. The local evaluation is an ongoing effort to encourage or require them to assess their own programs. We have felt they should have been assessed all along. The state evaluations are to assist them in their own planning and are an ongoing effort. Hopefully, the results of these various evaluation efforts will be articulated where appropriate. But I don't think they are necessarily conflicting. I think they serve different and quite legitimate purposes.

Question: Is there anything else we could do to emphasize greater working relationships between the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress? It seems to me that most of the legislation addresses more accountability. On the other hand, OMB has restricted data collection efforts as a result of federal laws. Is there any way we could get these two working together?

Response (Jack Jennings):

In response to the first part of the question on OMB, OMB has become more restrictive. I feel they should be, given the many data requests going out. There 's not much use in collecting a lot of information just for the sake of collecting it. But, if something is written in a law, as in this case, where we try to be as clear as possible regarding the purpose for which the data will be used, I don't see where OMB can say no. I don't see where there is a conflict right now, in the sense of the law saying one thing and OMB saying no. If it's in the law, it's going to have to be done. OMB will have to find different areas to cut back on, not the provisions that are set out in the law.

Question: What is being done by Congress to insure coordination does occur between federal agencies? What strategies and systems for coordination have been developed?

Response (Charles Radcliffe):

It is very difficult, as you know, at the federal level to deal with matters that cross departmental lines. It's especially difficult to get the U.S. Department of Labor and HEW, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Office of Education, to work together. But we are certainly encouraging that and, for the first time, Congress is setting up, by law, interdepartmental committees (Departments of Labor and HEW) working with the information and data base at the federal level. At the state level, we're trying to at least build bridges through cross-membership on advisory or administrative boards. For example, the Comprehensive Employment and Training people will serve on the State Advisory Council for Vocational Education and State Vocational Education Advisory Council people will serve on the Governor's Manpower Council under CETA. There are a variety of devices of that kind that can be used. It's a difficult task and Congress has no magic answers about how to bring about such cooperation. They certainly are trying to increasingly encourage cooperation. As Jack said earlier, our resources are limited and there's a growing unhappiness about our resources being wasted, and particularly unhappiness about people fighting over turf when really they're dealing with the same set of problems.

Question: Why has early childhood education been given such minor attention in the bill? Is the provision for day care centers a mandate for funding?

Response (Jack Jennings):

No, Congress wrote that in the bill as an authorized use of funds under the state's block grant. There is no mandatory requirement that this activity has to be funded by the state. I think you'll find that when we renew the legislation in 1982, very few federal dollars will have been used for day care centers under the Vocational Education Act. This is because it's going to be the state board of vocational education which is basically making the decisions regarding the authorization of funds for such programs. I do think its existence in the bill is more symbolic, in that it shows that Congress does feel it is extremely important that vocational education begin to do something about sex stereotyping. It is not telling vocational education it is at fault more than anybody else. It is a pervasive problem throughout society. It's Congress' way of saying that in the renewal of this legislation, vocational education has to make a start. Hopefully, other people will also make a start.

Question: Is Congress considering more restrictions on the funding of vocational education research?

Response (Jack Jennings):

With regard to the impact statement, it comes down to a situation where the congressmen decided that they had put relatively few restrictions on the expenditure of federal dollars for vocational research in the years past. The only restrictions have been on the amount of dollars that have been available. Congress clearly has been at fault in creating erratic funding patterns for that program and also in duration of funding. But when it comes to restrictions on the type of thing which can be funded, there have been relatively few. I think Congress felt that after looking around for the results of research and not finding many, they feared that millions of dollars spent for research may not have yielded much. This may be tilting the balance a little too much the other way, but Congress wants to see some results from research in the next five years. If they don't see results, then they may have second thoughts about funding vocational education research. That may be too harsh. Maybe it's being short-sighted to a degree. It was debated intensely until the bill came out of conference. Much time was spent by congressmen and senators debating the merits of these provisions. They finally decided that in this area they wanted results and they wanted them relatively soon. They did allow some flexibility in dealing with national contracts.

The provisions read that states cannot make research, curriculum development, or exemplary program grants. Rather, they must have contracts for all these purposes and they do have to show results. With the federal dollars, there can be grants in some situations, but these grants must show results within five years. There can be contracts without the restriction on showing results within five years. Thus, there is some flexibility for the U.S. Office of Education to contract with people without having to have this impact statement within five years. The national center, of course, is exempted from that requirement altogether, so there is considerable flexibility with funding that provision of the bill.

Now, it's a matter of balancing. I think the congressmen felt they had left the language too loose. They didn't feel they received a sufficient product. Even though it is now overbalancing in the opposite direction, it should provide assurance that they get visible results.

Question: What kind of evidence of results do you think Congress is expecting from vocational education research? Should they not have been more definitive?

Response (Jack Jennings):

The provision says that it has to have impact in the classroom in teaching techniques or curriculum materials. I don't think you would have wanted Congress to spell it out more specifically. If they did, I feel it might have been too restrictive. It's better that Congress expressed their intent which says that there has to be a reasonable probability of effects in the classroom. It doesn't say that there absolutely has to be overt results. It says there has to be a reasonable probability that something is going to come out of it. Now, if you want less flexibility than that, maybe next time around Congress will do so. In this bill, I think they just wanted to express their intent.

Question: You have given us many examples of how we must improve vocational education research, as well as problems we need to overcome; what other recommendations do you have for us?

Response (Jack Jennings):

That's the whole purpose of it. You know we had such a nice day here I was having second thoughts about reading my speech, but I don't want to not tell you the truth from our perspective. You know, as Secretary Richardson used to say, depending on where you sit determines where you stand, and we're sitting in a staff capacity for Congress. My paper reflects the congressmen's perceptions, more or less. There is some disagreement, but this is their perception. Now, people in the research community may have a different perception. People out in local school districts might have an entirely different perception, but all I'm trying to tell you is what Congress believes and what they'd like to see result from the federal money that is invested in vocational education research. I think when Congress comes back and looks at vocational education research, things had better be different than they are now. Look at the National Academy of Science's report on vocational education research. It's about 100 percent in accord with what the House Committee came out with in its committee report and there seems to be a view that vocational education is not on course. Part of it is Congress' fault. Don't take it as criticism that it's solely the research community's problem. Part of it is Congress. When you provide $20 million in one year, $35 million the next year, and $15 million the next year; and you provide it nine months into the school year, then the next year provide it three months after the school year has ended, and next year provide it six months into the school year, you know part of the problem is Congress. That's clear, but Congress is trying to clean up its act. Now it would like researchers to clean up their act.

Question: Why were the evaluation criteria in the bill selected rather than a multitude of other characteristics that could have been selected?

Response (Jack Jennings):

Society is so complex that sometimes you have to be simple-minded and say that "with these dollars, at this time, this is what we're going to try to do." I mean there are endless reasons, endless complexities in life, and sometimes you do have to put shutters on and say that if we're going to do this at this particular time, it may not achieve itself completely, but it's going to nudge people to some extent or it's going to push something in a direction that will bring about change. I think that's what they did with this legislation. There's an endless argument which you can make about

whether these are the only two criteria which ought to be used to judge the success of programs and the arguments are valid on both sides of the issue. It's just that, at this particular point in time, Congress is saying that vocational education has to more accurately show that it's training people for needed job categories than it's doing now. The local evaluation requirements do not say that the program has to be terminated if it does not show success in placement. It does not say that at all. All it says is that it's important to have that information and make it known. I don't mean to react so harshly, but I've just heard the evaluation question jump up a number of times and it shouldn't be misunderstood. It shouldn't be understood as the only test of whether anything succeeds, but it should be understood as an indication of whether funding from federal sources should continue for that particular program. Now, there may be other reasons. If you're in the middle of Cleveland and you're training kids and they can't get jobs, there may be a lot of other reasons why they can't get jobs. But, we should know what kind of program they're offering in Cleveland and whether it's meeting its objectives.

Response (Charles Radcliffe):

The other reasons, too, can be explained. There's nothing that says that if an abberation in the economy occurs (as in the construction industry in the last four years), it wouldn't be a perfectly satisfactory explanation for failure to place apprentice or vocational graduates in those jobs. We also feel that, in the long term, what we're moving toward, and I hope rapidly, is a far more sophisticated job market analysis than we have in place today. I hope that the national center, when it's established, can make a contribution to that end also.

Question: Are the research coordinating units in each state responsible for granting funds for research, development, and exemplary programs?

Response (Jack Jennings):

You're exactly correct. In the present law, which is to go into effect October 1, research coordinating units are mentioned under the research section and they are the funding authority for research grants. They are also told to develop comprehensive plans of program improvement. Under the exemplary program section, it reads that a state can make grants pursuant to these comprehensive plans for exemplary programs. In the curriculum development section, a state can make grants for curriculum development. That could lead to a situation like that which presently exists where three programs could be operated by three different units in the state department of education. What the original House Bill said was that all three programs had to be tied together into a comprehensive program improvement effort administered by the state research coordinating unit. That was lost in conference. It was lost partially through inadvertence and partially through some opposition. What the technical amendment bill does is restore the original House Committee language which says that all three programs would be administered by state research coordinating units pursuant to a comprehensive plan of program improvement. If the technical amendment bill goes through, the three programs will be integrated together in a much better fashion. This was one of the prime criticisms of the National Academy of Science report.